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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000409

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NANDE CONCERNS WITH INTEGRATION AND RWANDOPHONIE

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Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The military leader of PARECO-Nande, "General" LaFontaine, recently told us that, although the FARDC was readily integrating his rank and file troops, it was allegedly shunning him and his officers. LaFontaine complained that the FARDC had readily accepted CNDP and PARECO-Hutu elements in order to promote a pro-Rwandophonie agenda. LaFontaine said the FARDC in North Kivu fell into three general categories: those from Western DRC who only wanted to profit from their military position; Rwandophones who used their positions to further their ideology; and non-Rwandophone natives who, according to LaFontaine, were the only FARDC that protected the population. LaFontaine, who claimed to support the integration process, nevertheless warned that PARECO-Nande "could make trouble," if the FARDC did not address its concerns. End summary.

PARECO-Nande Rank and File Integrated into FARDC...

¶2. (C) We recently met with "General" LaFontaine military head of the Nande wing of PARECO to discuss the integration process and the rise of Rwandophonie influence in the Petit Nord (Note: In theory, LaFontaine is the military commander for the entire PARECO movement, although in practice he only exercises control over the Nande wing. End note.) LaFontaine noted that, although many of his troops had already integrated into the FARDC, there were an additional 2,000 awaiting integration, 800 for the FARDC and 1,200 for the Congolese National Police (PNC). This number also included the Hunde commander, "General" Ntasibanda, who has 50-200 troops near Pinga, with other forces in the Grand Nord. LaFontaine stressed his group's willingness to integrate and he was confident that the FARDC would eventually accept them. However, there were issues to address: sensitizing his forces; working out logistics; and ensuring the troops were efficiently integrated into the FARDC or PNC. LaFontaine claimed that he had persuaded Father Apollinaire Malu Malu, the Congolese Government's special envoy for the peace process in the Kivu provinces, to undertake a joint trip to Pinga and the Grand Nord to raise awareness, but this effort still needed financing.

...But PARECO-Nande Commanders Left Out

¶3. (C) In contrast to the FARDC's willingness to accept his rank and file, LaFontaine lamented that neither he nor his officers were welcome in the FARDC. In January, according to LaFontaine, PNC General John Numbi had met with him in Goma, promising "to be in touch" about a command position in the FARDC. LaFontaine has not heard back from Numbi, nor have any of his 36 officers been integrated. Recently, LaFontaine approached General Amuli on the subject, but Amuli reportedly

only offered to integrate four PARECO-Nande officers. Amuli told LaFontaine that his case "could only be decided in Kinshasa." LaFontaine pointed out that both RDF and FDLR elements have even been integrated into the FARDC. When pressed, he could not give figures, but he insisted that many had been brought in as part of the overall plan to increase Rwandophone influence. (Comment: Most observers agree that some Rwandans have integrated, but no one is able to estimate the numbers. End comment.)

¶4. (C) Despite all his complaints, LaFontaine maintained that he would continue to support integration, i.e., he would not block peace and reconstruction efforts. Nevertheless, he felt as if he and his officers had to grovel to try to obtain positions in the FARDC. The FARDC had accepted all CNDP and PARECO-Hutu officers because they were Rwandophones, LaFontaine claimed. The whole integration process, in LaFontaine's opinion, has aimed to privilege the Rwandophones over other ethnic groups in North Kivu, with redrawing the country's provincial borders (French: "decoupage") as an important tool to achieve domination.

The Different Faces of the FARDC

¶5. (C) Unsurprisingly, LaFontaine repeated predictable, but accurate, criticisms of the FARDC -- "they are a bunch of disorganized thieves." However, he also offered a more sophisticated analysis of the FARDC in North Kivu. He suggested that there were three separate types of FARDC operating in the province:

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-- "Westerners," who were primarily ex-FAZ, Lingala speakers. This group was not interested in North Kivu politics. Their sole goal was to use the military operations to steal and to make commercial profit.

--"Rwandophones," who claim they want to eliminate the FDLR, but, in reality, they are more likely to do business with the rebels. This group favors redrawing the country's political map as a means to dominate the Petit Nord. They often use military operations to further this agenda by attacking, looting, and raping the non-Rwandophone population.

--"North Kivu Natives," who are non-Rwandophones. This group really wants peace, according to LaFontaine, and they use their position within the FARDC to protect the population.

PARECO-Nande Could "Make Trouble"

¶6. (C) LaFontaine said that he had recently raised his concerns about Rwandophone domination with Malu Malu. When Malu Malu did not respond directly, LaFontaine suggested that he could "make trouble on the ground," if the FARDC continued to ignore him and his officers. He underscored that he and his troops would be willing to serve anywhere in the DRC, once integrated into the FARDC, provided they were confident that the North Kivu political and security situation was stable, e.g., no decoupage. (Comment: It was unclear from his often contradictory statements whether LaFontaine believed North Kivu was developing on a positive path. End comment.)

¶7. (C) Comment: As noted in reftel, non-Rwandophones in the Petit Nord, particularly the Nande, are apprehensive about the recent increase in attempts to promote Rwandophonie in the region. However, the Nande are most likely not in a position to actively challenge the Rwandophones. LaFontaine appears to recognize these limitations; hence his frustration, but his unwillingness to openly defy the integration process. For the moment, LaFontaine is more interested in trying to get some personal gain from the new

dynamics. It is significant that LaFontaine put some distance between himself and Malu Malu on the Rwandophone question. This could be evidence of a split in the Nande community between Nande on the ground in the Petit Nord and Nande politicians in Kinshasa. The Nande are a tight-knit group, so as long as enough senior players are on board with the current direction in North Kivu, it is unlikely that LaFontaine or others outside the fold will take up arms. End comment.

GARVELINK